

### **Background**

The Colorado Nurse Practice Act (NPA) is undergoing the sunset review process which means it is subject to change by the Colorado Legislature. The Colorado Medical Society approached Gov. Ritter directly when The Colorado Nurses Association stated they wanted the written collaborative agreement with physicians removed from the NPA language in order to increase access to Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs). The Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) then convened a group of 10 people, 5 of whom represented Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs), and the other 5 represented MDs to mediate an agreement. The purpose was to review the requirements under which NPs and APNs can prescribe medications. The group met a total of 5 times, with a mediator, and reached a consensus (see below) which stipulates increased oversight initially to obtain prescriptive privileges but the dissolution of the collaborative agreement. The report from this consensus was sent to DORA with the signatures of the Executive Director of the Colorado Nurses Association and the CEO of the Colorado Medical Society.

### **Summary of Consensus**

*NPs and APNs, after meeting educational requirements which include a masters degree and course work in pharmacology, and a further total of 3600 hours (about 2 years) of working under the guidance of a physician or of a physician and a qualified NP or APN, will be allowed to write prescriptions in their field of expertise.*

### **The Problem**

Almost immediately after the mediation group convened, a group of doctors from the Colorado Medical Society inserted an amendment to have language added to the NPA in addition to that agreed upon. Their requirement, described as a “**delegated medical function**”, would give the Board of Medicine (representing doctors, not nurses) and individual physicians authority over advance practice nursing. Delegated medical function is already in the Nurse Practice Act to describe the role of nurses, not APNs. This language is even more restrictive than what existed before the consensus (above) was agreed to. This request is before the Senate Health & Human Services Committee, and will be considered some time next week (3/9 to 13). **Amendment L006** is nursing’s own definition of Advanced Practice Nursing, and does not include a “**delegated medical function**”.

### **The Implications**

The Pearson Report appears annually in the American Journal of Nurse Practitioners and rates states according to their legislation and issues affecting advance practice nursing. Colorado currently is rated D. [Arizona and New Mexico are each rated A, Utah is B]. If the “delegated medical function” is added to the NPA, Colorado will most likely drop to F. This directly affects the number of NPs and APNs who will come to this state and also may affect the number who remain here. Patient’s access to APNs and primary care will drastically be limited by restricting independent practice of APNs.

Access to quality health care is one of the biggest challenges facing our state, especially in rural areas, and the availability of NPs and APNs will dramatically decrease.

### **What You Can Do**

Please contact the members of the senate HHS committee (below) and Senator Jim Isgar and ask that they **support** Amendment **L006**.

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